

Index, or ECI, by 1/2 percent per year. The 2001, 2002 and 2003 pay raises actually exceeded this standard and cut the gap from 13.5 percent to 6.4 percent.

In May 2002, the Department of Defense released its Ninth Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC), which acknowledged that current pay structure lags considerably behind pay for civilians of comparable age and education. And, the Department of Defense has been supportive of increased raises to restore a new comparability standard.

In summary, the capping of military pay raises below private sector pay growth for extended periods during the past 30 years has led to significant retention problems among second-term and career members of the Armed Forces.

Such retention problems cost the United States more in terms of lost military experience, decreased readiness, and increased training costs than maintaining the principle of pay comparability.

The remaining so-called pay comparability gap should be eliminated as quickly as possible, and military pay increases must sustain full comparability with increases in the Employment Cost Index.

My bill would ensure that military pay raises never again lag civilian pay raises. Existing authority to close the pay gap expires in 2006. This legislation adds to that authority by specifying that military pay raises must be at least at the level of civilian wage growth beginning in 2007.

I have been asked if I am doing this because of our troops returning from the Middle East and the war in Iraq. The answer is no and yes. No because this legislation builds on the legislation I offered in the 107th Congress and addresses the same problem of the pay gap with a different approach. This issue is not new to me.

The answer is also yes because I can think of no better way to show continued support for our troops than to send them a clear signal that the Congress and the nation value their service and sacrifice, both today and in the future.

This measure has the full endorsement of the Fleet Reserve Association and the Military Coalition, and I have attached their letter of endorsement.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this important legislation and work to ensure its quick passage. Nearly identical legislation was introduced in the Senate yesterday. Working together with our Senate colleagues, I urge my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee to include this legislation as a provision of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004.

THE MILITARY COALITION,
Alexandria, VA, April 30, 2003.

Hon. SUSAN A. DAVIS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of nationally prominent uniformed services and veterans' organizations representing more than five and one half million current and former members of the seven uniformed services, plus their families and survivors, strongly supports legislation you are preparing to introduce that would amend title 37, United States Code, concerning future military pay raises and their comparison with private sector pay growth. Under the provisions of your proposal, increases in pay for members of the

uniformed services would match the growth in the Employment Cost Index (ECI).

This is a priority issue, and the Coalition strongly supports the introduction of such legislation. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) already recommended that future military pay raises be based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). If that were adopted, military personnel would not receive comparable pay increases with those in the private sector, thus halting progress in closing the pay gap between military and civilian pay levels. In addition, the Administration budget request would cap FY2004 pay increases for NOAA and PHS personnel at the CPI level.

The ECI measures private-sector wage increases, while the CPI is an inflation gauge to preserve the purchasing power of retired pay, veterans' benefits and other programs. Retaining the ECI will ensure that pay increases for all seven of the uniformed services mirror those in the civilian economy. This is important to maintaining adequate recruiting and retention within the services and subsequently to our Nation's military readiness.

The Coalition appreciates your leadership on this issue and will work toward the enactment of this legislation into law.

Sincerely,

THE MILITARY COALITION.

TRIBUTE TO AMANDA BEAVER AND ASHLEY WATSON

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 30, 2003

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize Amanda Beaver and Ashley Watson of Grand Junction, Colorado. Amanda and Ashley are making a difference in their community and touching the lives of many of their neighbors in the Grand Valley, and today I would like to honor their accomplishments before this body of Congress and this nation.

Amanda and Ashley are fourteen-year-old students at Grand Mesa Middle School. This past year, they planned a fundraiser, "Answer to Cancer," to honor families who have been touched by cancer and to support the American Cancer Society. The girls, who both have grandparents with cancer, have spent nearly a year planning the event, which features dancing, games, and refreshments. They have seen outstanding support from the local community, receiving donations from local businesses and numerous individuals.

Mr. Speaker, Amanda Beaver and Ashley Watson have shown extraordinary leadership as young citizens of Grand Junction. Their volunteer efforts are offering hope to an important segment of the community and creating greater awareness of cancer among their peers as well as their elders. These two talented and determined young women clearly have great things ahead of them, and it is my great honor to recognize their hard work before this body of Congress and this nation today. I wish them all the best in the future.

HONORING THOMAS RONAYNE

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 30, 2003

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Thomas Ronayne, a decorated veteran and Commander of the Huntington Station Veterans of Foreign Wars.

After entering the United States Navy in January of 1980, Tom served aboard the USS Vogelgesang and the USS Vreeland. In September of 1983, he was Honorably Discharged from the Navy. For his service, Tom was awarded the Navy Expeditionary Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, two Navy Battle "E" ribbons, Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, the Navy Pistol Expert Ribbon, one Atlantic Fleet Command "Golden Grammy Awards" for Gram Analysis Excellence and two "Silver Grammy" Awards for Gram Analysis Excellence.

Tom became a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in 1996, joined Post #1469 in Huntington Station in 1998 and held various offices before being elected Commander in 2000. He still serves as Commander of the Huntington Station VFW, Nathan Hale Post 1469, the oldest VFW Post on Long Island and largest in downstate New York.

Tom also participated significantly in the operations and efforts at Ground Zero. He was injured as a result of the attacks on the World Trade Center and remained on scene for over seven months, participating in the recovery, clean-up and rebuilding efforts. Tom still visits regularly with the workers at Ground Zero.

Tom has three sons and lives in Greenlawn, NY with his wife Linda. I commend Tom Ronayne for his dedicated service to our country during his time in the Navy and in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center, and for his hard work on behalf of veterans on Long Island.

TRIBUTE TO FRED FLOWER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 30, 2003

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I take this opportunity and pay tribute to an icon of the Montrose, Colorado community who recently passed away. Leo Fred Flower, Jr. died at the age of 84 and as his family and friends mourn his loss, I think it is appropriate that we remember Fred for his many contributions throughout his life.

Fred was a longtime civic and business leader in Montrose whose affiliations ranged from the Western Slope Livestock Commission to the Montrose Industrial Development Board. He graduated from Montrose High School in 1934 and began working at a grocery store, later driving a truck for the Montrose Flour Milling Co. and pursuing further education. Eventually Fred began doing office work for the flour mill and for a local ranch and livestock business, which he would later purchase.

In 1940 Fred began a career in banking, interrupted by his service in the Army from 1942